

Race and Equity Pocket Questions

Title and purpose of this initiative:

Consideration of Additional 2024 Legislative Priorities

This agenda item is so the Town Council can discuss and consider additional legislative priorities for 2024.

Department: Town Council

What are the racial and equity impacts?

Setting legislative priorities can ensure transparency and public engagement can ensure policies are informed by equitable concerns. Policy makers can be held accountable for the racial and equitable impacts of their decisions and can help ensure equity is a central consideration in the legislative process. Prioritizing policies that address historical injustices, systematic discrimination, and access to essential resources and services can help create a more equitable society and level the playing field for marginalized communities. Unintentionally prioritizing policies that benefit certain groups can exacerbate existing inequalities and marginalized already disadvantaged communities.

Who is or will experience community burden?

Marginalized communities facing historical disparities in political participation, like people of color, low-income resident, or non-English speakers, may have limited access to have a chance for input into legislative processes. Residents relying on public decisions for service could be dissatisfied with council priorities. With public scrutiny on council decisions, marginalized groups may feel part of the process and therefore demand accountability and responsiveness from the council regarding their concerns.

Who is or will experience community benefit?

Legislative priorities that prioritize policies that address historical injustices, systematic discrimination, and access to essential resources and services could benefit all residents, including those from marginalized communities. The council, and as a result the residents, will benefit from having issues important to them in the forefront that will obtain exposure on larger arena when expressed to state and federal representatives.

What are the root causes of inequity?

Groups facing historical discrimination or neglect from local government may already feel excluded and distrustful of official channels. Individuals unfamiliar with navigating government processes or public participation might feel intimidated or unsure how to engage through alternative formats, leading to lower participation rates. Communities with limited internet access or digital literacy skills could be disproportionately excluded from the public input process. Lack of translated materials or multilingual support in alternative engagement formats can marginalize non-English speakers and limit their understanding of council decisions.

What might be the unintended consequences of this action or strategy?

Even well-intentioned policies can have unintended negative consequences for certain groups. Policies aimed at correcting one wrong may impact jobs in communities of color if alternative industries or support programs are not implemented.

How is your department planning to mitigate any burdens, inequities, and unintended consequences?

The town council has published clear priorities and will allow the community a chance to speak to them. Using plain language and avoiding technical jargon to ensure widespread understanding to all residents. The council will convey their priorities to the state and federal representative so they can also bring these issues forward in larger platforms.